

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1. (currently amended) A retractor comprising:

a frame having a top surface and a first guide receiving channel formed in the top surface;

a first tissue retaining wall;

a second tissue retaining wall ~~movably~~ coupled to the first tissue retaining wall, the first and second tissue retaining walls defining a space, the first and second tissue retaining walls being movably coupled to one another so that the first and second tissue retaining walls are moveable between a closed position and an open position, the space being larger when the first and second tissue retaining walls are in the opened position as compared to the closed position, wherein one of the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall is coupled to the frame; and

a first guide having an end, at least a portion of the first guide being sized and dimensioned to be received within the space defined by the first and second tissue retaining walls such that the first guide receiving channel at least a portion of the guide extends through the top surface of the frame and through the first guide receiving channel, the end being sized and dimensioned to be insertable into a first area of bone.

2. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein each of the retaining walls has a substantially flat side.

3. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the first and second retaining walls are nested relative to one another.

4. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein at least one of the retaining walls has a curved bottom edge.

5. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein at least one of the retaining walls has a compliant bottom edge.

6. (currently amended) A retractor comprising:
a frame having a top surface and a first guide receiving channel formed in the top surface;
a substantially continuous first tissue retaining wall, the tissue retaining wall having a plurality of living hinges so that at least one portion of the retaining wall is moveable with respect to another portion of the retaining wall so that the tissue retaining wall is moveable between a closed position and an open position;

~~a second tissue retaining wall movably coupled to the first tissue retaining wall, wherein at least a portion of the tissue retaining wall one of the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall is coupled to the frame;~~

a first guide having an end, at least a portion of the first guide being sized and dimensioned to be received within in-between the first and second tissue retaining walls such that at least a portion of the guide extends in-between the first and second tissue retaining walls and through the first guide receiving channel formed in the top surface of the frame ~~the first guide receiving channel,~~ the end being sized and dimensioned to be insertable into a first area of bone; ~~and~~

~~a hinge that joins the first and second retaining walls.~~

7. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the frame includes a mechanism that holds the retaining walls apart from each other.
8. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the first guide receiving channel comprises a slot.
9. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 8, further comprising a second guide receiving channel, the second guide receiving channel being disposed in the frame.
10. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 9, wherein at least one of the guide receiving channels is slotted.
11. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the retractor is substantially transparent.
12. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, further comprising a web that couples distal portions of the retaining walls.

13. (previously presented) A retractor comprising:

a frame having a first guide receiving channel;

a first tissue retaining wall;

a second tissue retaining wall movably coupled to the first tissue retaining wall, wherein one of the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall is coupled to the frame;

a first guide having an end, the first guide being sized and dimensioned to be received within the first guide receiving channel, the end being sized and dimensioned to be insertable into a first area of bone; and

a plurality of removable finger processes extending from distal portions of one of the first and second retaining walls.

14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The retractor system of claim 1, wherein the first guide is held in place with respect to the bone by a screw.

16. (previously presented) The retractor system of claim 1, further comprising a clamp or nut that cooperates with the first guide to assist in holding the frame in position relative to the bone.

17. (previously presented) The retractor system of claim 1, wherein the retractor has a second guide receiving channel spaced apart from the first guide receiving channel, and further comprising a second guide sized and dimensioned at one end to be received within the second guide receiving channel, and at another end to be inserted into a second area of bone.

18. (previously presented) The retractor system of claim 17, wherein the second guide is held in place with respect to the bone by a second screw.

19. (previously presented) A retractor comprising:

- a frame having a first guide receiving channel;
- a first tissue retaining wall;
- a second tissue retaining wall movably coupled to the first tissue retaining wall, wherein one of the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall is coupled to the frame;
- a first guide having an end, the first guide being sized and dimensioned to be received within the first guide receiving channel, the end being sized and dimensioned to be insertable into a first area of bone; and
- an expander having a handle and sloped walls.

20. (previously presented) A method of inserting a tissue retractor into a patient, comprising:

providing a retractor having ~~paired tissue retracting surfaces and first and second guide receiving areas~~ a substantially continuous tissue retaining wall, the tissue retaining wall defining a space, the tissue retaining wall including a plurality of hinges so that at least one portion of the retaining wall is moveable with respect to another portion of the retaining wall so that the tissue retaining wall is moveable between a closed position and an open position, the space being larger in the opened position than in the closed position, and a frame having a top surface and first and second guide receiving areas formed in the top surface;

percutaneously implanting first and second guides into different areas of bone in the patient;
positioning upper ends of the first and second guides into the space while the tissue retaining wall is in the closed position and[.] through the first and second guide receiving areas, respectively, thereby inserting the retractor into tissue of the patient; and

moving the tissue retracting surfaces apart from one another independently of the first and second guides.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of implanting comprises screwing the first guide into a pedicle of a vertebra.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of implanting comprises inserting the first and second guides into different bones.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, further comprising stabilizing the retractor on the guides using a wire.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the tissue retracting surfaces are substantially continuous.

25. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the first tissue retaining wall is moveable coupled to the second tissue retaining wall via a living hinge.

26. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall are moveable from a first position to a second position, the first and second tissue retaining walls are substantially flat when in the first position.

27. (previously presented) The retractor of claim 1, wherein the first tissue retaining wall and the second tissue retaining wall are substantially continuous so that the first and second tissue retaining walls form a substantially continuous wall.

28. (new) A retractor comprising:

a frame having a top surface and at least one two guide receiving channels formed in the top surface;

a substantially continuous tissue retaining wall defining a space, the tissue retaining wall including at least one hinge so that at least one portion of the retaining wall is moveable with respect to another portion of the retaining wall so that the tissue retaining wall is moveable between a closed position and an open position, the space being larger when the tissue retaining wall is in the opened position than when the tissue retaining wall is in the closed position ; and

at least two guides, each guide having an end, at least a portion of the guides being sized and dimensioned to be received within the space defined by the substantially continuous tissue retaining wall such that at least a portion of the guides extend through the top surface of the frame and through the guide receiving channels respectively, the end of each guide being sized and dimensioned to be insertable into an area of bone;

wherein at least one portion of the tissue retaining wall is coupled to the frame; and

wherein the retractor has a length and a width, the length of the retractor being at least twice as long as the width when the tissue retaining wall is in the closed position.